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ABSTRACT

Data gathered during the 1980 presidential campaign were analyzed in an effort to establish influence flow between adolescents and their parents concerning changes in opinions of candidates and issues. The data base consisted of a two-wave panel of 501 adolescent-parent dyads from throughout the state of Wisconsin. Twenty-eight mass media and external interpersonal communication variables were factor analyzed separately for the adolescent and parent samples utilizing principal components procedure with varimax rotation. Questions on four campaign issues and two candidate ratings were selected to determine opinion movement and direction. Findings indicated that the influence between parents and adolescents during the election campaign was bidirectional. When the parents did change their opinions, there was a closer similarity of communication activities associated with newspapers and attention to the primaries between themselves and their offspring. (HOD)

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POLITICAL OPINION CHANGE IN PARENT-ADOLESCENT DYADS: THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

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POLITICAL OPINION CHANGE IN PARENT-ADOLESCENT DYADS: THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

The impetus for this study was a perceived need in political socialization research for a bidirectional/reciprocal view concerning the roles of parents and their offspring. Empirical research has focused primarily on the role of parents, as well as schools, peers and mass media, as agents in the socialization processes of children and adolescents. But seldom has political socialization been studied as a process continuing throughout adulthood, and even more rarely have offspring been considered as one of the potential agents in their parents' socialization.[1]

The terms reciprocal and bidirectional are used interchangeably in conceptualizations and utilizations of models of two-way action or influence between individuals and certainly are in opposition to the ubiquitous unidirectional view of parental influence on children/adolescents. Klein et al. (1978) define reciprocity "as a generic term that characterizes all social interaction. It is therefore a feature of social relationships, involving mutual influence of one kind or another" (p. 108). Bengtson and Troll (1978) note that many variables affect the directional strength of influence between parents and their offspring. These variables "may influence the strength of reciprocal flow of socialization pressure, or at least the perceptions by members of each generation of the strength of this pressure. At one point in individual development, the greater influence may be from parent to child. At another point, the greater influence may be from child to parent. There is, furthermore, no reason to believe that this alternation is either all-or-none in nature or not likely to reverse again many times throughout life" (pp. 227-228).

This researcher feels that two elements most likely have been the barriers to research conceptualizing reciprocal/bidirectional influences. One has been the focus on the importance of parents as agents in a unidirectional "teaching" process. But as McLeod and O'Keefe (1972) suggest, social interaction may be a more productive way to explain socialization. And some researchers have noted that in an interaction approach the distinction between agent and socializee is not useful. For example, Riley et al. (1969) use the concept "reciprocal socialization" indicating that in the interaction between the socializer and socializee, the agent himself/herself "may thereby learn new or modified norms and attitudes--rather than merely reinforcing old ones. As the parent socializes the child, he almost certainly as a consequence both teaches certain things to himself and also learns from the growing child. In such fashion the reciprocal relationship between parent and offspring may play a part in socializing the parent himself during his middle years" (p. 961).

Although learning by the parent may come about as a result of the socialization of the child, the second barrier to reciprocal/bidirectional research is probably more important and directly addresses the issue--i.e., researcher' lack of interest in or denial of the need for socialization beyond adolescence. But Brim (1966), among others, notes that childhood socialization may be adequate for a person living in a relatively unchanging society, but in most cultures this isn't "adequate as preparation for the tasks demanded of him in later years. . . . Even though some of the expectations of society are relatively stable through the life cycle, many others change from one age to the next" (p. 18). And Vincent (1966), in discussing social change, points out the role of the family. He notes that the "socializing function of the family in preparing the individual for adult roles in the larger society is inseparable from the family's mediating function whereby the changing requirements (demands, goals) of the society and its other social

institutions are translated into the ongoing socialization of both child and adult members of the family" (p. 29).

It seems apparent that an individual's lifetime relationship with a dynamic political system certainly could not be static; and it seems reasonable to expect socialization, resocialization or desocialization across the life cycle.[2] Certainly there is no argument that childhood and adolescence are extremely important periods for political socialization and that orientations and patterns are established that are functional throughout one's lifetime. But it is just as likely that in later stages of the life cycle an individual's relationships with the elements of a dynamic political system would require creation, expansion, clarification, reinforcement or reorganization of political cognitions, affects and behaviors. These many and complex elements could be categorized as government (authorities), regime, and political community.[3] Others that might be included are other nations and structural elements of the political system, for example, politics, politicians, public officials and public policies.[4]

Brim (1966) adds an element that is important to the argument for life cycle socialization. He assumes that the process continues throughout one's lifetime and notes that the content of socialization is what changes. He argues that it moves from motivation to ability to knowledge and from a concern with values to behavior. He stresses that the priority in the socialization of children is motivation concerning the values of society and in adult socialization consists of knowledge about behavior. Knowledge might especially be required so that an adult can interact with some of the more transitory structural elements of the political system.

If adults are involved in political socialization, as "socializees," then potential "agents" in this process most likely are the mass media, co-workers, friends--and other family members. This study focuses on the role of offsprings'

influences, specifically adolescents. Research is plentiful which indicates quite a sophisticated level of political socialization is reached by or during adolescence. Orientations to political objects documented in research range from more abstract effects, for example, support for democracy in general and development of the concept of community, to more concrete dimensions, for example, knowledge gain and election behavior during political campaigns.

This study focuses on the direction of influence flow between adolescents and their parents concerning changes in opinions of candidates and issues during the 1980 presidential campaign. Although some researchers consider political socialization only as encompassing more abstract learning over long periods of time, the campaign period preceding an election seems a likely time that both adults and adolescents might experience influence on cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions which are important in the short-term of the election and also important due to their potential persistence or effect on other more abstract orientations and more permanent political objects. And any influence effects, including opinion change, occurs as part of a cumulative process and not in a vacuum.[5]

French and Raven's (1959) view of social power may provide a useful theoretical framework for explaining adolescent influence. One of the resources or bases of power they identify is expert power, i.e. the perception by the influencee that the influencer has "some special knowledge or expertness." The influencee attributes more or better knowledge to the other (probably in comparison to his/her own knowledge and some absolute standard) and has trust that the influencee is "telling the truth." The position taken here is that specific patterns of communication activities in parent-adolescent dyads act as an expert power resource base upon which adolescent influence can be expected. (It is assumed that parents have more power resource bases available than just expert power, for example, reward, coercise, legitimate and referent powers.)

More specifically, in this study expert power is assumed to consist of mass communication "habits/skills" and interpersonal communication "habits/skills" with others outside the dyad, which at least theoretically should provide a potential "agent" with opportunities to gain information and competence and be perceived by the influencee as special knowledge, competence, or ability or more and better knowledge, on the part of the agent. These communication activities, which are seen as personal attributes of members of the dyad, are exposure to political information from the following: newspapers, television, special events, and external interpersonal communication. Many studies have found exposure in these areas related to knowledge/information gain and information holding.[6]

But it is not an adolescent's communication activities per se that form the basis for expertise but in relation to the parent's communication. Research has consistently shown that adults are generally higher than adolescents in all areas of communication exposure. Therefore, for an adolescent to be perceived as having more, better or different knowledge/competency than his/her parent, all that is assumed is that the adolescent's communication activities are <u>closer</u> to that of his/her parent than an adolescent who is not perceived as having more or better knowledge/competency. Not only is it most likely as French and Raven suggest, that the influencee perceives expertise in comparison to his/her own and some absolute standard, but in this case that the parent may also compare the offsprings' communication activities to assumed levels of "average" adolescents.

Influence certainly should not be limited to effects on political opinions, and when that is the focus it need not be limited to movement toward agreement of opinions or even opinion change. But this study, which is a secondary analysis, was limited to an indirect measure of influence--utilizing opinion change toward agreement. It is conceptualized as change over time in one member's opinion to agreement with the other member of the dyad whose opinion remained stable. The

general hypothesis is that the pattern of communication activities proposed will distinguish parent-adolescent dyads in which movement of individual political opinions during an election campaign is in the direction of the adolescent from those in which it is in the direction of the parent.

It is expected that opinion change when initial disagreement occurs is more an outcome of the general structure of communication activities within the relationship, i.e., more likely to be consistent in direction than on a per issue or candidate basis. So even though historically there have been a few major political issues on which there was a definite generation gap and therefore a chance for adolescent influence within the family as well as throughout society, this study is interested in the type of adolescent-to-parent influence flow which it argues can occur for any issue at any time within certain parent-adolescent dyads; and this study attempts to isolate such occurrences during an important part of the political process, a presidential campaign.

The specific hypothesis to be tested is as follows: Parents will score higher on mass communication and external interpersonal communication variables than their adolescent counterparts, but the differences between the dyad members in the group in which the parents' opinions change toward the adolescents' will be smaller than the differences between the dyad members in the group in which the adolescents' opinions change toward the parents'. The hypothesized differences will exist for exposure to political information from the following: newspapers, television, special events, and external interpersonal communication.

METHODS

This research is a secondary analysis of data gathered during the 1980 presidential campaign as part of a political socialization project.[7] The data base consists of a two-wave panel of 501 adolescent-parent dyads from throughout the state of Wisconsin. The adolescents ranged from 10 to 18. Respondents were

interviewed twice, once in early 1980 prior to the Illinois and Wisconsin primaries and again in October 1980 prior to the fall election in which Ronald Reagan defeated Jimmy Carter.[8]

Political Opinion Movement

Influence is viewed as movement of the influencee's political opinion at Time 1 to agreement with the agent's stable opinion at Time 2, i.e. two groups of parent-adolescent dyads can be formed which are differentiated by direction of movement of individual political opinions on campaign issues and candidates. Within each member of the dyad, an opinion may remain stable or change over the course of the campaign. Between members of the dyad, if there is no movement their agreement or disagreement simply remains stable over the course of the campaign. If there is opinion change, it may be by the parent or the adolescent or both; and this movement may be toward or away from the other member of the dyad. Based on the various combinations of these two dimensions, eight dyad-types exist. The two of interest in terms of the focus of this study are "adolescent influence" and "parent influence."[9]

Adolescent Influence

*Adolescent's opinion remains stable, parent's opinion moves toward adolescent's at T_2.

Parent Influence

*Parent's opinion remains stable, adolescent's opinion moves toward parent's at T_2.

Questions on four campaign issues and two candidate ratings were selected to determine opinion movement and direction. Adolescents and parents were asked at Time 1 and Time 2 to rate Carter and Reagan and to give opinions on building more nuclear power plants, spending money on health and education, protecting the environment, and spending money on national defense and the armed forces. The questions and response categories are listed in Table 1.

Responses on the scale of strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree for each of the four political issues were then utilized to determine stability of opinions or direction of movement from Time 1 to Time 2 for individual respondents. "Disagree/agree" and "don't know" were considered positions at Time 1 which could result in opinion formation at Time 2, and these effects were considered opinion change. Responses to both ratings of the candidates (dislike a lot, dislike, like, like a lot) were similarly used to determine stability or direction of movement. "Like/dislike" and "don't know enough to form an opinion" were also considered positions that could result in opinion change.

Then a comparison of adolescent and parent responses in each dyad at Time 1 and Time 2 determined its placement in either the "adolescent influence" or "parent influence" group.[10] One limitation was put on the operationalization of influence via movement. In this study influence does not necessarily mean complete agreement between adolescent and parent, i.e. not exact correspondence of scale responses but correspondence on an agree-disagree dichotomy. Movement toward the agent must cross from strongly disagree or disagree to either agree or strongly agree, or vice versa. That is, for example, if one member of the dyad remains at strongly agrees from Time 1 to Time 2 while the other member's opinion moves from either strongly disagree or disagree to agree, that would indicate influence whereas movement on the latter's part from strongly disagree to disagree would not be considered influence. This operational definition may be narrower than some researchers might utilize, i.e. compared to a method weighting the various degrees of movement. But this researcher feels that the method utilized makes more sense conceptually and is better able to deal with problems concerned with unreliability of the measure.

Communication Activities

All of the twenty-eight mass media and external interpersonal communication

variables available for this secondary analysis were factor analyzed separately for the adolescent and parent samples utilizing principal components procedure with varimax rotation.[11] The nineteen variables that appeared in both samples to relate to one or more of four factors corresponding to political information from newspapers, television, debates and external interpersonal communication were retained as useful for analysis. Note that this was only an organizational procedure to determine what variables to utilize in hypothesis testing; the factors themselves will not be utilized in hypothesis testing. Loadings on the factors that each variable is most clearly associated with are presented in Table 2.[12]

RESULTS

The findings indicate that influence between parents and adolescents during an election campaign is bidirectional. A group of dyads does exist in which the parent's opinion changes in the direction of the adolescent; and a trend exists across some, but not all, of the communication variables examined in which these dyads do differ from dyads in which opinion change is in the direction of the parent.

Table 3 presents a comparison of the number of dyads in the adolescent influence group with the number in the parent influence group, as well as the stable disagreement and stable agreement categories. Stable agreement is the largest single category (32%); but when initial disagreement occurred and, therefore influence defined in this study as movement toward the other member of the dyad was possible, the tendency to change one's opinion is actually stronger on the average (60%) than sticking to one's own position (40%). On the average adolescent influence accounts for one-fourth the total when opinion change was possible, close to the one-third for the parent influence category. And when opinion change does occur, the adolescent influence group accounts on the average for 43% of the occurences, close to the 57% accounted for by the parent influence group. It is also interesting to note that the sizes of the adolescent influence and parent

influence categories are closer on the political issues than the candidates, with the exception of the defense issue. In fact, the two categories are extremely close on two issues and the adolescent influence category is slightly higher on the remaining issue. The larger differences between the sizes of the two categories on the ratings of the candidates might indicate more of a reluctance for parents to be influenced in terms of voting behavior since their adolescents cannot vote.

Therefore, as expected, parent influence occurs more often, but adolescent influence occurs often enough to warrant further consideration as a comparable behavioral type. And support exists that both types of influence may not be due to chance fluctuation or unreliability. Chi-square tests indicate that on all of the six political issues, when initial disagreement occurs parents are statistically significantly more likely to change their opinions to agree with their adolescents than they are to change their opinions to disagree with their adolescents when initial agreement occurs. The same is true for five out of the six issues for the adolescents' behavior, i.e. they are statistically significantly more likely to change their opinions to agree with their parents than they are to change to disagreement.[13]

An assumption underlying the conceptualization and rationale of bidirectionality/reciprocity between adolescents and their parents is that when opinion change occurs it is an outcome of the general structure of communication activities within the relationship, i.e. more likely to be consistently in the direction of adolescent influence or parent influence. Obviously even when there is initial disagreement, opinion change does not always occur; but when it does occur it is more likely that the political communication activities of the adolescent and parent have "set the stage" for either the adolescent or parent to be perceived as having more expertise across issues. It must be noted that the agent in the dyad is certainly not assumed to be the only influence on the influencee and that even the more dominant member of the dyad, in terms of perceived expertise, may

change his/her opinion on an issue. One obvious outcome of the latter notion is that it could appear in terms of the data that, for example, a dyad considered as adolescent influence on two issues might indicate on another issue that the adolescent was influenced by the parent. But in actuality perhaps the last issue never was of concern or interest within the dyad and the parent remained stable while the adolescent changed based on his/her own judgment or was influenced by another agent. Nonetheless, despite understandable exceptions, the general pattern expected is a trend toward consistency in adolescent influence or parent influence across issues. Table 4 presents the total number of dyads categorized as adolescent influence and/or parent influence across the six political issues. The results indicate that the general pattern expected does occur. In 30% of the dyads neither adolescent or parent influence occurs. When influence does occur, in 77% of the dyads only adolescent influence or parent influence occurs, i.e. there is no overlap. And when influence does fluctuate between adolescent and parent, the majority of the cases occur when an even split between just two issues is involved. As previously mentioned, some overlap is expected for reasons other than a deviation from the consistency expectation. But even though the expected pattern exists in terms of expected and observed, a chi-square test was not significant.

Concerning influence across more than one political issue/candidate, it can also be determined from the information in Table 4 that adolescent influence occurred on more than one issue in only 8% of the dyads. This low rate of multiple issue influence is similar for parent influence which occurred in only 13% of the dyads. Chi-square tests indicate these rates of influence are not significant.

Tests of Hypotheses

The next step is to determine what antecedents discriminate between the adolescent influence and parent influence groups. Table 5 presents the demographic characteristics of the two groups. Grade in school of adolescent ranged from

fourth through twelfth. Education of parent was scored as one for less than twelfth grade completed, two for high school graduate, and five for post graduate. Essentially there are no significant differences between the two groups, but it is interesting to note that there is a consistent trend across issues indicating the mean grade is higher for adolescents in the adolescent influence group than in the parent influence group.

It was expected that parents would score significantly higher on intrapersonal mass communication and external interpersonal variables in both the adolescent and parent influence groups, and with only three exceptions this is the case.[14] The first exception is the trend across all issues for both groups in adolescents scoring higher than their parents on the variable, tries to convince others to agree with self.[15] Watched any of the debates is another exception. The trend in the adolescent influence group is toward adolescents scoring higher than their parents; the trend in the parent influence group is toward adolescents scoring higher or equal viewing for adolescents and parents. This exception may have been due to required school assignments which involved watching one or more of the debates and, therefore, raised adolescent viewing close to that of the level of parent or slightly higher. Concerning the variable, attention to content of the debates, there is no clear pattern of direction across issues.[16]

Therefore, with very few exceptions, parents do score higher than their adolescent counterparts on the communication variables. But the core of the hypothesis was that even though parents would score higher, the differences between dyad members in the adolescent influence group would be smaller than the differences between the dyad members in the parent influence group. The rationale, as stated in a previous chapter, was that for an adolescent to be perceived as having more or better knowledge/competency than his/her parent, all that is necessary is that the adolescent's communication activities are closer to that of his/her parent than

an adolescent who is not perceived as having more or better knowledge/competency. The influencee perceives expertise compared to his/her own and some absolute standard.

Since this secondary analysis is exploratory in nature in attempting to isolate the occurrence of an active role for adolescents in their interactions with their parents, it was necessary to find basic support for the view that certain communication activities could distinguish across issues between dyads in which the parent changed his/her opinion to agree with the adolescent from those dyads in which the adolescent changed. It was necessary to determine if, across issues, the communication behaviors of adolescents and parents were more similar in the former group compared to the latter. Sign tests were utilized to test for the hypothesized differences. It must be noted that with such a small sample (N=6), a communication variable would have to be in the hypothesized direction on all six issues to be significant at $<.10$ (exact probability of six successes is .016). Therefore, in this study p=.109 is considered statistically significant (five out of six successes). Certainly results at that probability level would be support for the need for further investigation.

Table 6 presents sign tests comparing the adolescent influence and parent influence groups on the differences between adolescents and their parents on the communication variables across the six issues. The results indicate that variables associated with the newspaper factor, for the most part, do support the prediction; but the variables associated with the television, debates, and external interpersonal communication factors, with the exception of one variable, do not support the prediction.[17]

Differences on four of the five variables comprising the newspaper factor are significant at p=.109: newspaper exposure/days per week; attention to articles in newspaper; Guttman scale of media use; and rely on newspapers as primary source.

That is, differences between adolescents and parents in the adolescent influence group are less than the differences in the parent influence group. The trend in the differences on the remaining variable, number of newspapers read, is in the hypothesized direction but is not significant probably due to the small sample.

Application of sign tests across the six political issues to the variables comprising the television and debates factors indicates none are statistically significant. And only one variable out of the six comprising the external interpersonal communication factor is statistically significant. Attention to the Democratic and Republican primaries is significant at p=.109. That is, differences between adolescents and parents in the adolescent influence group are less than the differences in the parent influence group.

Although the rationale assumed and the hypothesis predicted only that perceived adolescent expertise would be associated with an adolescent's communication activities being closer to that of his/her parent's than when the parent was perceived as having the influence, it seemed worthwhile to determine if adolescents in the adolescent influence group scored higher on the communication activities than adolescents in the parent influence group. That is, even though perceived expertise is assumed to be a function of the relationship between adolescent and parent in each dyad, it might also be that the adolescents who were "influential" ranked higher than their peers on certain communication variables.

Concerning this prediction for adolescents across issues, three of the variables (newspaper exposure/days per week; rely on newspapers; and Guttman Scale of media use) are significant (p=.109) when the sign test is applied. When this pattern is looked at in terms of parents, i.e. parents in the parent influence group ranking higher than their peers in the adolescent influence, attention to newspapers, television news attention and attention to the Democratic convention are significant (p=.109). It should be noted that the adolescents in the adolescent

influence group not only score higher than their peers as mentioned, but also score higher on the newspaper variables compared to the remaining adolescents in the total sample. These patterns lend some support that expertise on the adolescent's part may exist as an antecedent for parental opinion change. But adolescent opinion change does not seem to be associated with parents' newspaper use, or media use in general, compared to other parents (i.e. parents may have, as suggested earlier, other resources or bases of social power).

Another assumption within the framework of this study was that adolescent influence is not issue dependent. But a chi-square test utilizing number of dyads across issues indicates there are differences ($p<.05$). And as can be seen in Table 6, the differences between the predicted scores for parents and their adolescents in the adolescent influence group compared to the parent influence group on all of the newspaper variables are associated strongly with some issues but not others. Application of the Sign Test indicates results are statistically significant for the nuclear, environment and defense issues and the rating of Reagan ($p<.05$), and not for the health issue and rating of Carter.

DISCUSSION

Strong arguments have been made in this study that socialization is a process across the entire life cycle, and it seems biased and unproductive that adolescents have very rarely been proposed as agents in their parents' socialization processes. Perhaps the results from this study will encourage researchers to include children, adolescents, and even adult offspring as <u>one</u> important influence in their parents' socialization processes. Whether adolescent influence within certain family types has always existed within the United States culture is debatable, although second-generation immigrants probably have had and will always have great influence on their parents' political socialization processes. But

certainly since the 1960s, the exclusion in research of adolescents as potential influencers on others besides their peers seems unrealistic and unproductive.

Influence during an individual's political socialization process certainly need not be limited to influence on political opinions of candidates and issues during a presidential election, although this study has argued that area is also important to pursue. And even if influence is defined as such, it still need not be limited to change toward agreement of opinions or even opinion change. But the results of this study indicate that when influence is defined as political opinion change toward agreement by one member of the dyad while the other remains stable, indeed adolescent influence does occur.

Although there certainly are problems in this study dealing with such an indirect measure of what this researcher defines as "influence," the results indicate that when the parents do change their opinions, the closer similarity of communication activities associated with newspapers and attention to the primaries between themselves and their offspring does exist. And their offspring differ from other adolescents whereas the parents do not differ from each other. But definitely more research needs to be done in order to isolate adolescent influence, actually bidirectional/reciprocal influences, as a part of the parent-adolescent interaction; and this includes better measurements of influence and more control over confounding variables. It certainly could be that other influences are affecting opinion change, i.e. oneself, media, etc. And even if "adolescent influence" as defined here is operating in some of the dyads in that particular grouping, other influences may be occurring in other dyads within that same group. It should be noted that analyses were conducted early in this pursuit to verify that there was not a general trend in the country toward change in a particular direction for each of the issues/candidates which might have accounted for the political opinion changes found in this study. But that only eliminates one potential confounding element.

Another aspect that needs further investigation is the assertion that adolescent influence is not issue dependent, that the potential for influence within families should be considered for all political issues and not just a few major issues that dominate once in awhile in which generation gaps might occur within society, e.g., the Vietnam War. The results from this study seem to indicate that there are not just a few special "major" issues on which adolescent influence may exist, since these issues were rather "typical" during a rather "typical" presidential election; but adolescent influence did not occur on all of the issues either. In addition to the concerns specified, future research must include control of the demographic variables and control of the levels of use of media for both adolescents and parents. Analyses should include summative measures of adolescent and parent influence across issues.

NOTES

[1]Studies which have isolated effects of adolescents on parents' political socialization are Keniston (1968), Hagestad (1977), and Baranowski (1978).

[2]Dennis (1973a,b) cites political socialization across the life cycle as one of ten important dimensions around which research can be organized, and he proposes adult political socialization as one of two areas that "should get our most immediate attention" (p. 494).

[3]Dennis cites Easton (1957).

[4]Dennis cites Greenstein (1965) and Almond (1965).

[5]Chaffee et al. (1970); Jennings and Niemi (1974).

[6]Many studies of adults and adolescents have found that higher television and newspaper exposure and attention paid to political content were related to knowledge gain and information holding during political campaigns (cf. Blumler and McQuail, 1969; McClure and Patterson, 1974; Chaffee et al., 1970; Chaffee, 1977). But many studies have found newspaper exposure and attention superior to television in knowledge of political issues and candidates' stands on these issues (cf. McLeod, Bybee and Durall, 1979; Patterson, 1980). And many studies have indicated the value of television debates in terms of information gain concerning issues and candidates (cf. Sears and Chaffee's, 1979, overview of the 1976 presidential debate studies). Concerning external interpersonal communication, O'Keefe and Atwood (1981) note a few studies indicating findings of interpersonal discussions and information seeking from interpersonal contacts for the purpose of information gathering. And Robinson (1976) in his revised model of opinion leadership indicates opinion givers, as well as opinion receivers, utilize interpersonal and mass media sources for information acquisition.

[7]The project was supported by a National Science Foundation grant to Jack Dennis, Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison; David O. Sears, Department of Psychology, University of California at Los Angeles; and Steven H. Chaffee, Institute for Communication Research, Stanford University.

[8]The telephone survey utilized random-digit dialing procedures to randomly select respondents proportionately across the state of Wisconsin.

Parents ages ranged from 28 to 70 with a median age of 42 years. Educational level was somewhat above the national average with 52% high school graduates and another 39% having attended college. Slightly more mothers (54%) were interviewed than fathers because more children of broken families live in female head-of-households. Half of the dyads were same-sex pairs.

[9]The other categories are stable agreement and stable disagreement. Remaining categories are as follows: the adolescent's opinion at Time 2 has moved away from the stable opinion of the parent; the parent's opinion at Time 2 has moved away from the stable opinion of the adolescent; adolescent and parent have swapped positions at Time 2; and both adolescent and parent change opinions in the same direction.

[10]If either parent or adolescent at either Time 1 or Time 2 had no response concerning an issue/candidate, the dyad was eliminated from that analysis.

[11]Some variables were measured both at Time 1 and Time 2, others only at Time 1. Variables measured at both time periods were averaged. All variables were scored with higher numbers assigned to indicate positive direction and lower numbers to indicate negative direction.

[12]This researcher had expected to find a factor defined by "special political events", instead the debates variables formed the separate factor and attention to Democratic and Republican primaries, attention to Republican Party Convention, and attention to Democratic Party Convention loaded strongly on other factors.

[13]Adolescent Influence: nuclear ($p<.01$); health ($p<.001$); environment ($p<.01$); defense ($p<.001$); Carter ($p<.001$), Reagan ($p<.001$).
Parent Influence: nuclear (ns); health ($p<.001$), environment ($p<.10$); defense ($p<.001$); Carter ($p<.001$); Reagan ($p<.001$).

[14]The comparisons were made utilizing t-tests for paired samples. On the newspaper and television factors across the six issues the trend is toward parents scoring higher than their adolescent counterparts in almost all cases. In terms of significant differences of $p<.10$ or less, on the newspaper factor parents scored higher than their adolescents across the six issues 23 out of 30 times in the adolescent influence group and 27 times in the parent influence group. Significant differences on the television factor occurred 29 out of 30 times in the adolescent influence group and 28 times in the parent influence group. With the exception of the variable, tries to convince others to agree with oneself, the trend on the external interpersonal factor is parents scoring higher than their adolescents in both groups in almost all cases. In terms of significant differences, and excluding the convince variable, the pattern occurred 24 out of 30 times in the adolescent influence group and 23 times in the parent influence group.

[15]On the "convince" variable, the trend for all issues for both influence groups is adolescents scoring higher. The differences are significant in all six cases for the adolescent influence group and four out of six times for the parent influence group.

[16]Concerning the variable, having watched any of the debates, the trend in the adolescent influence group is toward adolescents scoring higher, although only two of the differences are actually significant. The trend in the parent influence group is also toward adolescents scoring higher or equal viewing for adolescents and parents, and the three differences found are significant. Concerning attention to content of the debates, there is no clear trend across issues and only one significant difference each in both groups, and the differences are in opposite directions.

[17]The sign, not just the magnitude, of the differences between parents and adolescents in both influence groups had to be considered in applying the Sign Test. Although most of the variables across the six issues are in the positive direction indicating parents scored higher than their adolescents, when this was not the case the following logical criteria were utilized:

* If adolescents scored higher than parents in the parent influence group but parents scored higher than adolescents in the adolescent influence group, the difference between the two groups supported the null hypothesis.
* If adolescents scored higher than parents in the adolescent influence group but parents scored higher than adolescents in the parent influence group, the difference between the two groups did not support the null hypothesis.
* If adolescents scored higher than parents in both influence groups, but the difference in the adolescent influence group was larger than that in the parent influence group, that did not support the null hypothesis. But if the difference in the adolescent influence group was smaller than that in the parent influence group, that did support the null hypothesis.

Table 1. Questions and Response Categories for the Political Issues and Candidates.

*The government should build more nuclear power plants to produce electricity. (strongly disagree, disagree, disagree/agree, agree, strongly agree)

*The government should spend less money on things like health and education. (same responses as above)

*Protecting our environment is more important than producing more energy. (same responses as above)

*The government should spend less money on national defense and the armed forces. (same responses as above)

*Rating of Carter. (dislike a lot, dislike a little, dislike/like, like a little, like a lot)

*Rating of Reagan. (same responses as above)

Table 2. Factor Regression Coefficients for Mass Media and External Interpersonal Communication Variables.

Variables	Newspapers A*	Newspapers P*	Variables	Television A	Television P
Newspaper exposure/ days per week	.93	.88	Television national news/days per week	.81	.86
Attention to articles in newspaper	.70	.72	Television national news attention	.76	.73
Number of newspapers read regularly	.55	.57	Control of television news viewing situation	.43	.60
Media use-- Guttman scale	.53	.63	Exposure to television news programs/specials	.25	.49
Rely on newspapers as primary source	.40	.48	Attention to Republican Party Convention	.35	.42
			Attention to Democratic Party Convention	.32	.46
	Debates			**Interpersonal**	
	A	P		A	P
Watched any of the debates	.88	.92	Talk about national politics with others	.74	.68
Attention to content of debates	.92	.95	Talk to people with different views	.65	.51
			Initiate political discussions	.60	.58
			Try to convince others to agree with self	.52	.51
			Make effort to learn about things in news	.46	.39
			Attention to Democratic & Republican primaries	.34	.33

*A: adolescent sample
P: parent sample

**These scales were developed with this data set by Steven H. Chaffee and Albert Tims (1982). They are ordered from television-newspapers-magazines.

Table 3. Number of Parent-Adolescent Dyads, by Categories of Direction of Movement or Stability (N=501).

	Nuclear	Health	Environment	Defense	Carter	Reagan	$\bar{X}$
Adolescent Influence	43	40	50	27	31	50	40 (8%)
Parent Influence	45	35	47	73	51	70	54 (11%)
Stable Disagree	110	46	81	50	52	38	63 (13%)
Stable Agree	126	245	75	180	191	152	162 (32%)
Other*	177	135	248	171	176	191	183 (37%)**
	(501)	(501)	(501)	(501)	(501)	(501)	

*This includes the following dyad categories: the adolescent's opinion at Time 2 has moved away from the stable opinion of the parent; the parent's opinion at Time 2 has moved away from the stable opinion of the adolescent; adolescent and parent have swapped positions at Time 2; and both adolescent and parent change opinions in the same direction.

**Totals for averages include rounding error.

Table 4. Dyads Categorized as Adolescent Influence and/or Parent Influence across Issues (N=501).

Parent Influence	Adolescent Influence: No issues	One issue	Two issues	Three issues
No issues	151	86	23	3
One issue	108	49	13	0
Two issues	40	11	3	1
Three issues	8	2	1	0
Four issues	1	1	0	0

Table 5. Adolescent Influence and Parent Influence Categories Compared on Demographic Variables (Means or Percentages).

	Nuclear	Health	Environment	Defense	Carter	Reagan
Grade of Adolescent						
Adl Infl	8.91	7.93	8.60	8.04	8.35	7.94
Par Infl	8.44	7.63	8.34	7.95	8.26	7.27
Sex of Adolescent*						
Adl Infl	46.5%	50.0%	36.0%	40.7%	51.6%	36.0%
Par Infl	42.2%	45.7%	44.7%	54.8%	58.8%	60.0%[a]
Education of Parent						
Adl Infl	2.44	2.83	2.42	2.63	2.52	2.58
Par Infl	2.84[c]	2.54	2.68	2.47	2.71	2.67
Sex of Parent*						
Adl Infl	44.2%	42.5%	54.0%	55.6%	54.8%	60.0%
Par Infl	60.0%	48.6%	48.9%	49.3%	47.1%	61.4%
Same Sex**						
Adl Infl	47%	58%	54%	56%	45%	44%
Par Infl	51%	34%	58%	48%	37%	47%

*Percent female.

**Percent of dyads in which dyad members are of the same sex.

[a]$p<.01$; [b]$p<.05$; [c]$p<.10$

Table 6. Comparison across Issues of Adolescent Influence and Parent Influence Groups on Adolescent-Parent Difference Scores on Newspaper, Television, Debates, and External Interpersonal Communication Variables.

		Nuclear	Health	Environment	Defense	Carter	Reagan
Newspaper							
Newspaper exposure/ days per week[a]	AI	1.30	1.70	1.14	1.82	2.16	1.24
	PI	1.86	1.97	2.11	2.35	1.71	2.43
Attention to articles in newspaper[a]	AI	.87	1.08	.72	.81	1.03	.58
	PI	1.16	1.03	1.10	1.02	1.04	1.31
Number of newspapers read regularly	AI	.44	.45	.36	.33	.54	.20
	PI	.53	.31	.36	.53	.55	.69
Media use-- Guttman scale[a]	AI	.25	.45	.26	.52	.77	.28
	PI	.40	.75	.53	.53	.53	.59
Rely on newspapers as primary source[a]	AI	.09	.10	.10	.19	-.03	.20
	PI	.13	-.11	.36	.27	.16	.33
Television							
Television national news/days per week	AI	2.05	1.45	1.42	1.50	2.74	1.36
	PI	1.62	2.57	1.62	1.82	2.14	1.08
Television national news attention	AI	.96	.87	.70	.70	1.52	.28
	PI	.75	1.05	.75	.88	1.20	.66
Control of television news viewing situation	AI	.93	1.15	.92	.89	1.13	.80
	PI	.95	1.15	.91	.87	1.12	.71
Exposure to television news programs/specials	AI	.79	.73	.94	.41	.90	.48
	PI	.60	.80	.53	.66	.61	.70
Attention to Republican Party convention	AI	.58	.07	.34	.11	.03	.16
	PI	.22	.37	.47	.20	.24	-.11
Attention to Democratic Party convention	AI	.67	.52	.50	.26	.35	.24
	PI	.13	.15	.15	.48	.75	.09

Table 6. (Cont'd).

		Nuclear	Health	Environment	Defense	Carter	Reagan
Debates							
Watched any of the debates	AI	-.05	.03	-.20	-.37	-.03	-.11
	PI	-.24	.00	.04	-.14	.00	-.18
Attention to content of debates	AI	.07	.35	-.26	-.55	-.09	.14
	PI	-.20	.18	.30	-.13	.47	-.01
Interpersonal							
Talk about national politics with others	AI	.33	.67	.52	.37	.71	.60
	PI	.51	.79	.36	.51	.30	.43
Talk to people with different views	AI	.07	.00	.24	.37	.39	.16
	PI	.20	.63	.21	.31	.00	.22
Initiate political discussions	AI	.14	.43	.24	-.15	.39	.14
	PI	.06	.17	.23	.10	.42	.20
Try to convince others to agree with self	AI	-.39	-.40	-.36	-.81	-.62	-.54
	PI	-.54	-.08	-.47	-.52	-.23	-.40
Make effort to learn about things in news	AI	.26	.22	.22	.26	.45	.08
	PI	.26	.42	.19	.22	.21	.16
Attention to Democratic & Republican primaries[a]	AI	.53	.60	.50	.55	.77	.56
	PI	.71	.40	.68	.58	.87	.53

NOTES: (1) Difference scores were obtained by subtracting the adolescent's score from the parent's.
(2) AI refers to the adolescent group and PI to the parent influence group.
(3) The comparisons were made using the Sign Test, which utilizes the direction of the differences rather than quantitative differences.

[a] $p=.109$

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